

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here today as the Democratic cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, being the first cochair of this millennium, and happy to share this role with my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

We will be submitting an education appropriation to address the role of education and our children.

Mr. Speaker, we are here today to celebrate March as Women's History Month and to highlight the extraordinary achievements of all women throughout our history, while recognizing the equally significant obstacles they have had to overcome along the road to success.

Women's History Month has progressed from Women's History Week, established in 1978, to coincide with International Women's Day, which we will celebrate tomorrow, March 8th.

It is during this time that we acknowledge American women of all cultures, classes and ethnic backgrounds who have served as leaders in the forefront of every major progressive social change movement, not only to secure their own rights to equal opportunity, but also in the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor movement, the civil rights movement, and other movements to create a more fair and just civil society for all.

Women have played, and continue to play, a critical economic, cultural and social role in every sphere of our Nation's life by constituting a significant portion of the labor workforce working in and out of the home.

One of the most significant roles of women is that of mother, bearing children, nurturing and protecting their children.

In an effort to provide for the well-being of her children, a mother takes charge of all health and educational needs critical to the child's development. Thus tonight we will focus on women and education.

As a mother and grandmother, I am well aware of the importance of a quality education in the lives of young people and know that next to mother a teacher is probably one of the most influential persons in a child's life.

As a former educator and the only Member of Congress to serve on the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, I have been committed to promoting quality teachers in our Nation's public schools.

Tonight I would like to discuss the issues of teacher recruitment, retention and professional development.

Mr. Speaker, it is widely recognized that investments in teacher knowledge are among the most productive means of increasing student learning. Despite our gains, much work still needs to be done. We need to ensure that all of this Nation's children are taught by well-prepared and well-qualified teachers who have access to ongoing professional development and lifelong learning opportunities.

The creation of more vigorous and rigorous professional standards for teachers is one methodology to address teacher preparedness. These standards ensure that teachers will know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to children; that they will understand how children learn and what to do when they are having difficulty; and that they will be able to use effective teaching methodology for those who are learning easily, as well as for those who have special needs.

While new teaching standards may hold great possibilities for raising the quality of teacher preparation, these advances will have little impact on the Nation's most vulnerable students if school districts continue to hire teachers who are emergency credentialed and who are assigned to teach outside of their field of expertise.

According to the Journal of Teacher Education, students learn significantly less from teachers who are not prepared in their teaching area. Fields like mathematics, physical science, special education, and bilingual education are suffering from a shortage of teachers across different regions of this country.

These shortages occur in part because some States prepare relatively few teachers but have rapidly growing student enrollment. In my State of California, enrollments are projected to increase by more than 20 percent in that State by the year 2007.

In order to achieve the educational goals and success we hold for all of our children, we must develop strategies that do not trade off student learning for the hiring of unqualified teachers. In addition, we must be willing to provide qualified teachers, especially in the urban areas, with professional salaries and much needed training and services.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud to celebrate this month as Women's History Month.

We also need to create high quality mentor programs for beginning teachers and expand teacher education programs in high need fields so that individuals wishing to teach math, science and special education can obtain the training necessary to accomplish their goals. I am committed to ensuring that America's teachers are well trained, and well compensated. What goes on in classrooms between teachers and students may be the core of education, but it is profoundly shaped by the policies we propose and pass in Congress. We must support the work of teachers

and school administrators and work together to strengthen America's educational system. It is my hope that together, we can develop innovative methods to ensure that there is a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every child in the United States of America. Women across America let's celebrate this month and showcase the accomplishments of women.

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RECOGNIZING FIVE CITIZENS FROM MARYLAND FOR THEIR FINE SERVICE TO OUR NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCREST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GILCREST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call my colleagues' attention to the fine service to our Nation by five citizens from my Maryland Congressional district: Mr. John Williams of Elkton, Mr. Richard Noennich of Elkton, Mr. William Jeanes of Earleville, Mr. Donald H. Burton of Chesapeake City, and Mr. Emmett Duke of Chestertown.

Very often we go on with our busy lives and forget that every day our government is making decisions and plans that will affect our health, our lives and our future. Every day so many of us take for granted that someone else will take up the causes for which we care and serve as the watchdog over our Federal institutions. Often we are too busy to get involved and our government moves ahead without critical oversight from the people, leaving accountability to be sacrificed on the altar of convenience.

More than 4 years ago our government, emboldened by the neglect of its elected leaders, was determined to move forward on a public works project in Maryland to deepen the Chesapeake and Delaware canal that connected the Delaware River to the Chesapeake Bay. This particular project was both a disservice to the taxpayers and a sin to our fragile Chesapeake Bay. A proposal to spend over \$100 million on this wasteful and unnecessary project was never challenged. Yet five men from opposite corners of the community and separate walks of life met by chance and formed an alliance in the name of injecting honesty and integrity into an intimidating government review process. Led by the guiding principle of truth and a commitment to public service, these patriots faced the air of entrenched special interest with little outside support and ultimately triumphed in their efforts.

After enduring years of ridicule by editorial writers, being stonewalled by government bureaucrats and marginalized by many of their own elected officials, they were recently vindicated in their work by the rightful collapse of the project when the